

FACTORS MOTIVATING WOMEN CHEESE PRODUCERS IN KWARA STATE

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Abstract

Cheese production is an income generating opportunity in the agricultural industry that could employ the teeming youths in the populace. The study was carried out in Asa Local Government area of Kwara State where a total of eighty-eight women from five cheese organisations were interviewed. The findings revealed that most (78.8%) of the women were young and had no formal education (67.0%). The motivating factors identified in the study were interest in the business, profit from the business, friends appeal and extension agents recommendation. The constraints to cheese production were the issue of unsold products, shortage of funds, poor communication by extension agents. The study therefore recommended that there should be proper enlightenment of graduates in institutions around the area on the opportunities available in cheese production and also training of the producers to move them from the crude way of production to more healthy and acceptable techniques available in developed countries.

Key words: Women, Cheese, Motivation

Introduction

The dearth of employment opportunities in the nation has been recorded by various authors (Aganga, 2010; Agbaegbu, 2011; Akeredolu, 2010; Asaju, 2014). Agriculture and allied enterprises have been posited to be a major employer of labour (FAO, 2010). Apart from the rearing of livestock and production of crops, the processing of agricultural products remains a green sector that has not been tapped into by unemployed youths. One of such enterprise is cheese production.

Cheese is a generic term for diverse group of milk-based production. It is produced by the coagulation of the milk protein casein. It is defined as a product made from the curd obtained from milk by coagulating the casein with the help of rennet or similar enzymes in the presence of lactic acid produced by added microorganisms, from which part of the moisture has been removed by cutting, cooking and/or pressing, which has been shaped in a mould, and then ripened by holding it for some time at suitable temperature and humidity (Walther, 2008).

The importance of cheese to human health include; nutrition, cavity protection, cancer prevention and decrease in high blood pressure (Walther *et al.*, 2008; Ogbolu *et.al.*, 2014; Lawal and Adediji, 2013). Women have been synonymous with cheese production and vending (Cadmus *et al.*, 2013).

Description of the Activities involved in Cheese Production

Activities Involved cheese production in cheese

production as observed included:

1. Obtaining fresh milk from cows either by milking directly or by buying.
2. Pounding of Rennet leaf Sodom apple plant (*Calotropis procera*) and mixing with cow milk to form cheese.
3. Heating the milk and Rennet leaf on low heat to form cheese.
4. Packaging of cheese for marketing.

A vivid account of its preparation is described by Tona (2014)

*“Preparation of the coagulant was first carried out using vegetable rennet extract of the Sodom apple plant (*Calotropis procera*) shown. The stems and leaves of matured and fresh Sodom apple plant (*C. procera*) were plucked, cleansed thoroughly with water, cut into pieces and ground in a mortar with pestle to extract the juice. The extract was mixed with a little milk and sieved out and about 4 ml of the leaf extract was used in about 1000 ml of milk for soft cheese preparation.*

About 1000 ml of milk was heated slowly to approximately 45 to 50°C in about 30 to 40 minutes. The milk was stirred gently during the heating process with a wooden spoon. Approximately 4 ml of the vegetable rennet extract was then added to the warm milk and the mixture was again heated with intermittent stirring to about 95°C and kept at this temperature until there was coagulation and the separation of curd and whey, when the heating was stopped. The sign of coagulation was observed within the range of 10 – 20 minutes as from the time that the extract (coagulant) was added. The curd was then further

boiled for 20 minutes to inactivate the vegetable extract (coagulant) and to facilitate whey expulsion from the curd. The whey was then left to drain through small local raffia baskets into a collecting bowl. The small conical raffia baskets used give shapes and sizes to the cheese. The soft cheese was then sent for sale immediately or stored in the whey for 2 to 3 days.”

Concept of Motivation

Motivation can be defined as the dynamically changing cumulative arousal in a person that initiates, directs, coordinates, amplifies, terminates, and evaluates the cognitive and motor processes whereby initial wishes and desires are selected, prioritized, operationalized and (successfully or unsuccessfully) acted out (Dörnyei & Otto, 1998).

There are various factors that influence entrepreneurs' involvement in business activities. Lusier (1995) found that education and experience gives positive motivation towards being involved in business. Nurulhuda and Ramlee (2009) in Mohd Riduwan *et al.* (2012) suggested that entrepreneurs should have prior work experience and undergo related training in their field to manage their business effectively. Also Sofian and Nawawi (2007) in Mohd Riduwan *et al.* (2012) found that government support through training programmes can increase motivation and entrepreneurial skills.

According to (Nuhu, Nonye and Bawa, 2014), some of the barriers observed that inhibit participation of women farmers in agricultural production generally are: lack of land ownership right; non availability of credit and loans facilities; poor access to extension staff; inadequate training and low standard of education. Could this be said of cheese production?

However, according to (Ayeni *et al.*, 2014), uneducated women have dominated the production and vending of cheese in most parts of Nigeria. The clamour for value addition therefore indicates potentials available in cheese production and sales as an income generating activity. The dominance of the women in cheese making suggests some motivating factors that can be encourage unemployed youths. The study seeks to provide answers to the following research questions:

1) what are the socio - economic characteristics of women in cheese production ?

2) what are the factors that motivate women to cheese production?

3) what are the perceived constraints to cheese production in the study area?

Materials and Methods

The Study was conducted in Asa Local Government Area (LGA) of Kwara State. The LGA was purposively chosen due to the predominance of women producing Cheese. The local Government shares boundaries with Ilorin west, Ilorin South, Oyun and Ifelodun Local Government Areas of Kwara and Oyo States respectively. Their headquarter is a town called Afon. The population for the study was made up of women from five Cheese Organisations, which included Irewolede, Tokolase, Omolere, Olorunlosola, Irewolede and Muslims groups. The data was collected through a structured interview schedule. The data collected was analysed with frequency counts and percentages.

Results and Discussions

Socio-economic Characteristics of the respondents

Data in Table I shows the results of the socio-economic characteristics of the women. It showed that 8.0% of the respondents were between 20-25 years, 21.6% were between 26-30 years and 32.9% were between 31-35 years. Over half (71.2%) of the respondents are within the youthful age. It implies that they are still at the working age, hence are expected to participate effectively in cheese production. Also most (88.8%) of the respondents were married while 10.2% were single, 1.2% were divorced and 6.8% were widowed. Furthermore, 67.0% had no formal education, 4.6% had adult education, 4.8% had the qur'anic education while a total of 13.6% had attempted at least primary school. It shows that the educational status of the respondents was very low. According to FAO (2016), there is substantial overlap and interlinkage between food processing, communication and education in the food system. Education is essential in food processing, packaging and marketing. Lack of education or low level of education would impair food processing. Most of the respondents (61.4%) were Muslims, while 15.9% were Christians and 19.3% belong to the African Traditional Religion. This result was expected because the state is known to be predominantly occupied by Muslims.

Table 1: Socio-economic Characteristics

Age	Frequency	Percentage
20-25	07	8.0
26-30	19	21.6
31-35	29	32.9
36 & above	33	37.5
	88	100
Marital Status		
Married	72	81.8
Single	9	10.2
Divorced	1	1.2
Widows	6	6.8
	88	100
Level of Education		
No formal Education	59	67.1
Adult Education	4	4.5
Islamic	13	14.8
Primary	8	9.1
Secondary Education	4	4.5
	88	100
Religion		
Christianity	14	15.9
Islam	54	61.4
Traditional	17	19.3
Others	3	3.4
	88	100

Source: Field survey, 2015

Experience in Cheese Production

Data in Table 2 shows that, 15.9% of the respondents had between 1-5 years' experience in cheese production, 40.9% had 6-10 years' experience, 28.4% had been producing cheese for

11-15-years while 14.8% had over 16 years' experience. This shows that the respondents were fairly experienced to respond to questions about their activities as well as challenges that they had been facing over the years.

Table 2: Years of Experience of Dealing with Cheese

Years of Experience	Frequency	Percentage
1-5	14	15.9
6-10	36	40.9
11-15	25	28.4
16 & above	13	14.8
	88	100

Source: Field survey, 2015

Training before venturing into the business

Respondents were asked if they had any training prior to starting the business to which majority (78.4%) responded yes while 21.6% said no. This reveals that a measure of training is needed before embarking on cheese production either by apprenticeship or by formal education. This agrees with the assertion of Nurulhuda & Ramlee (2009) that prior experience is needed to undergo related training in the field of business.

Motivational factors in Venturing into Cheese Production

Data in Table 4 shows that most (65.9%) of the respondents were in the business because of the quick turn over, 5% were interested in cheese

making, 6.8% saw it as a family business and thus inherited it from their parents while 8.0% and 6.8% were motivated to do the business as a result of the encouragement they got from extension agents and their friends respectively. Some of the factors agree with Nuhu, Nonye & Bawa,(2014).

Table 3: Training before Starting Cheese Production

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	69	78.4
No	19	21.6
	88	100

Source: Field survey, 2015

Table 4: Motivating Factors for Cheese Production

Factor	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Quick turn over	58	65.9	1
Special Interest	11	12.5	2
Family Business	6	6.8	4
Extension Agent	7	8.0	3
Friends appeal	6	6.8	4
	88	100	

Source: Field survey, 2015

Constraints to Production of Cheese

Data in Table 5 revealed that the three most severe constraints to cheese production were the issue of unsold products (29.6%), shortage of funds (20.5%) and poor communication by extension agents (15.9%). Others were shortage of personnel (12.5%), lack of awareness of the importance of cheese (11.4%) and poor pricing of products (10.2%). It is in agreement with the work of Nonye, Nuhu & Bawa (2014) that found out that non availability of funds and access to extension activities were barriers that inhibit women in agricultural production.

Table 5: Problems Encountered by Cheese Producers

Problem	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Issue of unsold product	26	29.6	1
Poor pricing of product	09	10.2	6
Shortage of personnel	11	12.5	4
Lack of awareness	10	11.4	5
Shortage of fund	18	20.5	2
Poor communication of vital information by extension agent	14	15.9	3
	88	100	

Source: Field survey, 2015

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

The study revealed that cheese production was carried out mostly by young uneducated women. The motivating factors identified were quick turn over, interest in the business, extension agents' recommendation, friends appeal and inheritance of

the business. Some of the constraints identified in the study were poor pricing of product, shortage of personnel, poor communication of vital information by extension agents.

The following recommendations are therefore made:

- There should be training of the producers on a better and modern way of producing cheese as obtained in the developed economy.
- There is need to provide loan facilities at affordable interest rates to encourage the upcoming and existing producers in order to expand the industry.
- There is need for intense research activity to proffer solution to the preservation of unsold fresh cheese in the absence of power to use refrigerators.
- There should be proper enlightenment of graduates in institutions around the area on the opportunities available in Cheese production.

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